

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 /084 W
-----011075 220743Z /14

R 211330Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2000
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 2909

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SGEN HU
SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN NATIONALITIES POLICY

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE PRESS PRAISES HUNGARY'S NATIONALITIES POLICY.
END SUMMARY.

1. OVER THE PAST YEAR THE HUNGARIAN PRESS HAS FREQUENTLY CARRIED
ITEMS EXTOLLING THE REGIME'S NATIONALITIES POLICY. THE LATEST
INSTANCE OCCURRED JULY 18, WHEN THE PARTY NEWSPAPER, NEPSZABADSAG,
CARRIED AN ARTICLE ENTITLED, "IN TOTAL EQUALITY." THE AUTHOR,
CHAIRMAN OF THE BEKES COUNTY COUNCIL (BEKES COUNTY BORDERS ROMANIA
AND YUGOSLAVIA), POINTS OUT THAT 15 PER CENT OF THE COUNTY'S
POPULATION SPEAKS SOME LANGUAGE OTHER THAN HUNGARIAN. (THIS IS
THE MOST COMMON WAY OF DEFINING MINORITIES.) FOUR MINORITY
NATIONALITIES ARE REPRESENTED IN BEKES COUNTY: SLOVAKS, ROMANIANS,
SERBO-CROATIANS, AND GERMANS. THE ARTICLE POINTS TO THE FOLLOWING
STATISTICS TO BUTTRESS ITS ARGUMENT THAT ALL NATIONALITIES ARE WELL
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OFF. IN BEKES COUNTY:
-- OF 15 REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT, FOUR COME FROM
MINORITIES;
-- IN VARIOUS LOCAL TOWN COUNCILS THE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE
SPEAKING MINORITY LANGUAGES IS FROM 11 TO 45 PER CENT.
-- THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
OPERATE IN MINORITY LANGUAGES; THREE CITIES HAVE BOTH SLOVAK

AND ROMANIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS;

-- THE NUMBER OF PUPILS ENROLLED IN MINORITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS HAS INCREASED BY 50 PERCENT OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

3. THE ARTICLE ALSO QUOTES FROM THE PROGRAM OF THE LAST PARTY CONGRESS ON NATIONALITIES POLICY: "OUR PARTY HOLDS THE VIEW THAT THE LENINIST NATIONALITY POLICY FORMS AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION FOR INTERNAL STABILITY OF A SOCIALIST COUNTRY AS WELL AS ACTING AS A FORM OF COHESION BETWEEN SOCIALIST STATES AND FRIENDSHIP AMONG PEOPLES."

4. COMMENT: HUNGARY IS IN AN EXCELLENT POSITION TO PURSUE A FORTHCOMING POLICY TOWARD NATIONAL MINORITIES, GIVEN THE FACT THAT THEY CONSTITUTE A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. THE GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF REDEFINING WHO BELONGS TO A NATIONAL MINORITY, AND INCREASING IN THE PROCESS THE NUMBERS WHO CAN CLAIM MINORITY STATUS. A FORTHCOMING NATIONALITIES POLICY IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE REGIME'S "ALLIANCE POLICY" AND ITS RELATIVELY RELAXED INTERNAL SITUATION.

5. OF COURSE, HUNGARY'S NATIONALITIES POLICY IS UNDERSTOOD BY ALL TO HAVE IMPLICATIONS WHICH REACH BEYOND HUNGARY'S BORDERS. HUNGARY'S DECLARED POLICY WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES IS THAT THE NATIONAL MINORITIES SHOULD SERVE AS BRIDGES BETWEEN COUNTRIES. THE REGIME HAS BEEN FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING THIS LINE WITH THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY YUGOSLAVIA.
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6. THE GREAT EXCEPTION IS ROMANIA, WHERE THE TREATMENT OF THE ETHNIC HUNGARIAN MINORITY IS AN ISSUE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS. BY EXTOLLING ITS OWN POLICY AND CITING STATISTICS SUCH AS THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE, THE REGIME ALSO POINTS UP THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ITS POLICIES AND THAT OF ROMANIA. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THIS IS A CALCULATED RESULT AND IS ONE MANNER IN WHICH THE HUNGARIAN REGIME EXPRESSES ITS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE TREATMENT OF THE ETHNIC HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA. THE FACT THAT COOPERATION WITH ROMANIA IS LESS THAN WITH ANY OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRY IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT WHEN ARTICLES ARE PUBLISHED WHICH REPORT VARIOUS CONGRESSES HUNGARY HAS HELD ON SUCH QUESTION AS LANGUAGE STUDY, EDUCATION, AND PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF MINORITIES -- CONGRESSES WHICH ROMANIA BOYCOTTS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WHILE OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES PARTICIPATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONALISM, POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUDAPE02909
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780301-0968
Format: TEL
From: BUDAPEST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780735/aaaabdbu.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 93f5146f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1930334
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUNGARIAN NATIONALITIES POLICY BEGIN SUMMARY: THE PRESS PRAISES HUNGARY'S NATIONALITIES POLICY. END SUMMARY.
TAGS: SGEN, HU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/93f5146f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014